

essential to salvation, and no one has any right to the name of Christian who denies it. It was deplorable to elect as President of this great country one who denies that the Word (who was made flesh and dwelt among us) was God.

But it seems to be a mockery of Christ to have one to lead us to Him in prayer who denies the essential truth of the gospel and the veracity of the Lord Himself.

The Christian citizenship of this country will do well to see that the Lord is honored in the choice of men to lead and rule in this land. We can not expect to continue to receive the blessings that come to us from God through Christ while we assist in dishonoring His name.

R. I. L.

THE REAL ATTITUDE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE DIVORCE QUESTION.

By G. V. Fradryssa.

The "Morning Star," in its issue of August 7th, 1909, published the following editorial:

"In one of the monthly magazines Cardinal Gibbons, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in this country, writes on marriage and divorce from the Romish standpoint; that the sacrament of marriage is indissoluble, and divorce is in every case a violation of the Law of God. He evidently thinks that the safety of our people and of their morals and happiness is in the Church of Rome. But our people can not forget that the Papal See has always exercised the inconsistent right of dissolving marriage, and sanctioned many marriages after divorce. Nor can it be forgotten that in Catholic countries, with the so-called indissoluble marriage, immorality abounds. The absence of divorce is the occasion of all manner of violations of good morals."

Thus speaks the Presbyterian of the South in its issue of July 28. Queer memories the people the Presbyterian represents must have—not to be able to forget a thing that never was or never will be, either in fact or the memory of man. Would the Presbyterian, please, tell us, when the Papal See ever exercised "the inconsistent right of dissolving marriage" and when it has ever "sanctioned marriages after divorce"? Of course, we know it means a tremendous task to go through all historical records for no other purpose than to make an honest attempt to prove the above statement; but, does the Presbyterian not feel the necessity of proving so sweeping an assertion which, if not true, is a slander pure and simple? Whoever is responsible for such a statement, and makes it without warrant, or, after making it, does not try to prove it, is a malicious traducer.

And we say the assertion is not true, not only in its sweeping character, but the very principle involved in the case is abhorred by the Church, and history knows of no case where the Church has dissolved a rightful marriage and permitted remarriage afterwards. How, then, can the Presbyterian make this charge without doing violence to historic truth? The stand taken by the Presbyterian seems to imply its acquiescence in the principle of divorce. If so, where, then, does it find the authority to set at naught Christ's injunction: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder"?

In the above the editor of the official Catholic paper of his grace Mr. Blenk speaks as though either the Papal See never has dissolved a marriage, or as though such a case can not be produced by the "Presbyterian of the South." In both instances the Morning Star lacks the brightness which its name would lead the unsophisticated public to suppose it possessed.

In the following are presented some historical facts and some Roman doctrines whereby it is hoped not only to establish the correctness of the position of the

"Presbyterian of the South," but also at the same time to fulfill a work of mercy (according to Roman Catholicism) by teaching one who attending to his occupation ought to know, but does not know.

In the beginning of the Middle Ages Charlemagne, the most renowned Roman Catholic of that epoch, repudiated his wife, the daughter of King Desiderius, and married another but, nevertheless, was the most beloved son of the Popes who granted him the right and honors of the Sacred Empire. I know one of the Popes sought to punish him, but the others practically approved of his unjustifiable divorce and damnable remarriage.

Henry IV. of France, was allowed by the Papacy to repudiate his former wife and to marry another.

Napoleon, the First, abandoned his wife, Josephine, and married the daughter of the Apostolic Emperor of Austria with the knowledge and connivance of the Papacy and with the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

Even the case of Henry the Eighth of England, is an indirect proof that the Holy See was accustomed to dissolve marriages. If the official organ of Mr. Blenk were better acquainted with Ecclesiastical History it could readily be shown that in that epoch this power was recognized as belonging to the Pope not only by many English prelates and theologians, but by some cardinals of Italy, and many Canonists of other nations. Cardinal Canganelli, afterwards Clement the Fourteenth, (the famous Pope who by his infallible authority condemned the Jesuit Order "as corrupt in its purposes, morals and doctrines") while Cardinal was wont to say, "I deplore the pertinacity of the Papacy against Henry the Eighth, the more so because under such circumstances the Holy See used to do otherwise." Henry the Eighth, himself, was well enough acquainted with Ecclesiastical History to understand that he was not asking for a new and impossible concession. What inflamed Henry and England against Rome was, not the refusal itself, but their conviction that they were slighted, in being denied what Rome had been wont to grant other kings and nations.

Therefore, what every impartial writer is compelled to admit, in the face of these and other facts, is, that while the Holy See has perhaps never granted divorces to the poor and middle classes, it has been more generous in this regard in dealing with emperors, kings, and princes.

Let us now take a glance at the Roman doctrine on this subject. Were the official paper of Mr. Blenk well acquainted with Roman Ethics and Canonical Law, it would easily recognize that Catholic marriage remains ever in the restless hands of the Holy See. That See reserves the right to increase at her pleasure what the Romanists call *impedimenta impediencia* (reasons which hinder marriage) and *impedimenta detrimenda* (reasons which dissolve marriage). This arbitrary doctrine occasions frequently wretched divorces. For example: Before Tridentine Council, every Catholic priest could perform the marriage ceremony, since this Council only the pastor can do so. But because the Tridentine Council's actions were not promulgated and recognized in France, Germany, England, etc., Canonists believed that in those nations